



# Hedgehog Welfare

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December 2020

Without doubt, 2020 has been a difficult time for everyone and everything. It was a hard Summer for hedgehogs and Hedgehog Welfare - and was quickly followed by a manic Autumn and the start of Winter. Janet has been caring for hedgehogs for more than 42 years and has never seen the volume of numbers coming in, and for such a long period. It started at the beginning of October and did not ease off until the second week of December. But thanks to the dedication of the Hedgehog Welfare Carers, we battled through.

However, despite all our sterling efforts, our figures make stark reading. Since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 we have taken in 225 hedgehogs. The good news is our caring work saw 121 hedgehogs released. And we have two still in care. Sadly, we lost or had to put to sleep 102. I know this is a terrible percentage rate, but we lost so many through Thornyheads. The medication is killing the parasitic worm, but the hedgehogs cannot shift the dead parasite's body through its system. The worms start to decay in the peritoneal cavity and cause peritonitis. Our vet Christoff and Janet have contacted some of the country's leading wildlife vets to try to find a solution to the problem. It appears to be local to us, we think possibly other carer groups don't know about the dilemma because they don't carry out post-mortem examinations on their hedgehogs. However, no matter how busy he is, Christoff wants to find out more. Hopefully, we can solve the case soon.

## Carers Training

Because of the lockdown regulations this year's British Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (BWRC) Symposium was a virtual affair. However, more than 100 people - among them vets, ecologists, and wildlife rehabilitators - "tuned in" to the conference. Five members from Hedgehog Welfare - including Janet who is a trustee of the BWRC - logged onto to the talks.

The BWRC - a volunteer-run charity - looks to promote the welfare of injured wild animals while in care and after being released. It covers all British Wildlife - including hedgehogs, foxes, badgers, and birds (both song and prey). Although not a caring welfare organisation it hopes to improve the standard of Wildlife Care by education. It started in 1988 and meets at venues up and down the country (Janet joined in early 1990s as their treasurer and still holds that post).

The BWRC chair Terri Amory studied the effect of Covid-19 on UK wildlife carers. She reported how local groups had not only lost charity income but had struggled to find suitable PPE and veterinary equipment and, in some cases, veterinary care. Speakers also presented work on cat predation and Coccidiosis in hedgehogs. Neil Forbes, the founder of Vulture Alliance, gave a fascinating talk about science helping injured vultures back into the wild, and how this science

can be transferred into helping our own birds of prey. There was also an interesting presentation by Sabrina Brando on *Compassion Fatigue in Wildlife Rehabilitators*.

Terri Amory said: "Many wildlife rehabilitators struggle to attend conferences because they cannot leave their patients and because of the cost of travel. But one silver lining from the COVID pandemic is that people have become more comfortable engaging with virtual events. Going forward we will be able to blend in-person and virtual events, making them more accessible and convenient for a much wider national audience."

The symposium was enjoyed by all those attending from Hedgehog Welfare.

## Help Protect the Hedgehog

More than 66,500 people have signed a petition to save Britain's dwindling hedgehog population. Wildlife experts have recently added the hedgehog to a "vulnerable to extinction" listing. Now, petitioners want the Government to move the mammals to schedule five of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This will afford hedgehogs greater protection and hopefully help their numbers recover. If the petition hits 100,000 signatures it opens a possible Commons debate.

Fay Vass, CEO of the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, has launched the campaign. She said: "What people do on behalf of the hedgehog is amazing. The holes made in fences, the feeding, the hedgehog houses, the wildlife friendly planting, the removal of hazards - all makes such a difference locally. But it is not enough to rely on the good will of individuals to protect this important creature. We need the government to enforce wildlife-friendly practices. From farming to development to transport - wildlife needs to be taken seriously. The Government recently announced a ban on the outdoor use of metaldehyde - an active ingredient in slug pellets. But more needs to be done."

So far, the Government's written response is: "We are concerned about the decline in hedgehog numbers in England and the findings of the Red List for British Mammals, published earlier this year by the Mammal Society, which has classified hedgehogs as 'vulnerable'. As set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan, we are committed to taking action to recover our threatened native species. Hedgehogs are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 from being killed using prohibited methods such as crossbows, traps and snares. Whilst the reasons for the decline in numbers of this native species are complex, the Government has not previously moved to protect this species under Schedule five as it is not clear that such protection would be of benefit to the species."

Protect the UK dwindling hedgehog population before it's too late. - Sign this petition - Petitions (parliament.uk) <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/550379>

## Hedgehog Information

We are still receiving lots of calls about hedgehogs out at night. I suspect all the little ones have been picked up or have been fed in the garden where they were found, as they were almost up to weight.

Some have gone into hibernation, but they appear to be coming out every few days; although it is cold the ground has not really frozen yet, so please keep leaving out a little hedgehog food (dried, chicken based, kitten or cat biscuits) and to remember to check that the water is not frozen before going to bed. The weather is set to turn colder in the next few days so perhaps the hedgehogs will go into proper hibernation. Their time coming in and out of hibernation burns up a lot of energy, so it will be better for them to go into a proper hibernation, particularly if it is a long winter.

If you see a hedgehog that is small, limping or has an injury or circling there is something wrong and you need to telephone our help line 07940 714830 straightaway, we are still about we do not close for the Winter and although we are in Tier 4 now we can still take in hedgehogs as we are considered an essential service - but remember we have to follow Covid 19 hand over regulations especially as Sally and Janet (and many of the carers are shielding).

Which are as follows:

If you find a sick, injured, or underweight hedgehog **TELEPHONE US FIRST ON 07940 714830. PLEASE DO NOT JUST TURN UP, HOWEVER WELL YOU KNOW US, THIS IS REALLY IMPORTANT.**

You will be told what to do and where to bring the hedgehog - it will be to one of two carers, Sally or Janet, whoever is on duty. Bring the animal in a small cardboard box. Wear gloves that can be washed or thrown away. On arrival you will find one of our intensive care boxes with just a sheet of newspaper in the bottom. Transfer the hedgehog to the box with no bedding using your gloves, try not to touch our box or speak to the hedgehog. We will get all the information needed when you make the first call. If we need more, we will telephone you after we have examined the hedgehog. If you wish, we will keep in contact with you via email or text, so you know how your hedgehog is doing. After you have placed the hedgehog in the box, return to your car taking your cardboard box and gloves with you. Use a hand cleaner if possible. Please destroy the box at home, never re-use the box for another hedgehog as we do not know what is wrong with your hedgehog and we do not want to pass it on. If it is a plastic box, wash it out well, inside and out with bleached water. Once you are back in your car, we will collect the hedgehog. If you want to wait to ensure we do this, that is all right **but do not approach us please.** Of course, if you have or anyone in your household have Covid-19 or even cold symptoms, please do not come. We will give you as much help and advice as we can over the telephone, so you can help them in the wild or in your home. If the animal is extremely injured or sick, we will ask you to see if your support person can take it to a vet or ourselves. If after you brought the hedgehog to us you develop Covid 19 please let us know, so we can take the necessary action.

**Hedgehog and Hibernation Boxes** - Please remember that hedgehogs if they are too warm, or if they do not have enough ventilation, will not hibernate well. So please do not over-insulate boxes with polystyrene foam, plastic, carpet, etc as this will make the hogs struggle to hibernate and there will not be enough food for them naturally to eat if they come out. Hedgehogs kept too warm will not hibernate. Also, a lack of ventilation around the box can bring on chest and lung problems. So, let them breath and do not try to care for them too much, providing them with a box and a little bedding is enough help and of course a little food and water.

**Lucy McKee** In the last Newsletter we reported the Lucy McKee was doing her Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award by bringing to people's attention "How they can help the Hedgehog". She also raised £20.00 for Hedgehog Welfare by making hedgehog hibernation boxes. Well, Lucy has now been presented with the DoE Bronze Award. Well done Lucy.



She wants to be a vet and is still helping Hedgehog Welfare by rubbing down and varnishing some of our cages and dividers which we use in intensive care cages. This is a job that we never have time to do but it does really prolong the life of the cages and dividers.

Lucy is also going to become a hedgehog carer with us, with the support of her Mum, as soon as we have a suitable hedgehog. Do not worry Lucy, you will get a hedgehog in the Spring if not before.

## **Can you Help Us Too?**

If anyone has time on their hands and would like to help us, by repairing cages, rubbing down cages and re-varnishing them, we have plenty of little jobs that need doing, it can all be done in your own home. If you can help because you are on furlough and/or have time on your hands, please ring Janet on 07940 714830.

## **Hedgehog Welfare Quiz Results and Start of next Quiz**

**Quiz Results:** A cryptic quiz entitled "Blooming Beautiful", run by John Kitchen to raise funds for Hedgehog Welfare, ended on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020. It raised £453.00. Thank you to everyone who entered. Also, thank you to those who sent a donation with your entry £1.00 fee.

The winners are: -

First        £15 Mrs Eve Morley

Second      £5 Pauline Hellier

Consolation £5 Mrs Pat Killoran

Congratulation to all the winners and thank you to everyone who entered. This was the most successful Quiz that John has ever run.

John has done another Quiz called "Crafty Christmas". I'm sorry we're late to let you know but perhaps it's something you can do in long nights in January 2021. The closing date is the

31<sup>st</sup> January. You can pick up the quiz from [letsgetquizzical25@yahoo.com](mailto:letsgetquizzical25@yahoo.com) (John's E-mail address). Or if you prefer they are available from Hedgehog Welfare at [janethedgehog49@gmail.com](mailto:janethedgehog49@gmail.com) or by post from Hedgehog Welfare, PO Box 8686, Grantham, NG31 0AG. If you are applying by post to Hedgehog Welfare, please send your £1.00 entry fee per sheet required together with a SAE for us to send the quiz sheet(s) to you.

From his quizzes John has raised almost £1,600.00 for Hedgehog Welfare. It is a wonderful amount, remembering it is raised from £1.00 entry fees and donations. We are grateful to John (and Pat) for giving a lot of people so much fun, especially during lockdown.

## Case Study

### Beatrice

Beatrice came into care at the end of October. She'd been found in the middle of Grantham. She was ice cold, dehydrated, very small for the time of year - just over 100g - and full of internal parasites. We believe she had not only eaten rat poison which gave her an internal bleed.

Beatrice stole Janet's heart, she really did not think she would make it but with the help of our wonderful vet Christoff, she slowly recovered. She had to have lots of fluids to flush out the poison and because of the dehydration, she did not eat for almost three days. Slowly she started to recover and began to eat raw minced turkey thigh meat and then on to baby cat biscuits. She became stronger and once she was signed off by the vet she went off to Lynda (Alcock) to be looked after. We released her on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2020 weighing in at 574g, perhaps a little too chubby but looking wonderful. We hope that Beatrice will go on to have a long and happy life.



Sally has also been busy making face masks. Children's at £5.00 each, adults at £6.00 (plus some which are extra-large). For people who wear glasses there are anti-fog masks at £6.00 each. If you are interested, please contact Janet by email or 07940 714830



Plain Navy or Cars



Hares, Flowers, Yellow with dots



Hedgehogs, Woodland Beige or Grey

## Funny how things happen

Janet had an enquiry back in October from a lady who found a hedgehog nesting in the bedding under her hen, she did not want to put the hedgehog out but rang for advice. The hedgehog was a good size, and she liked the idea of hogs being in her garden.

The hedgehog moved on the next night, perhaps taking up home somewhere else in the garden.

Janet emailed her the usual information and newsletters but the next morning, she received a reply saying, "I love the information and newsletters, but I think you have the wrong person, as I live in Alaska". The lady explained she used to live in Britain but had moved to Alaska.

She added she really missed having hedgehogs visiting as they do not have them in Alaska, but she did have other wonderful wildlife, so she now receives the Hedgehog Welfare Newsletters to remind her of home. As for the "hen" lady, Janet phoned and got the correct email address. The hedgehog did not revisit the hen hut again. So, Hedgehog Welfare now has a follower in Alaska now as well as well as the lady in Newark who had a hen who tried to hatch a hedgehog.



If you have any stories for the newsletter then please contact our editor Philip Braund. Philip is a former Fleet Street journalist and an award-winning television producer for ITV. He can be contacted on [DaisyDogMedia@gmail.com](mailto:DaisyDogMedia@gmail.com)

**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS, CARERS AND SUPPORTERS, WITHOUT YOU HEDGEHOG WELFARE WOULD NOT BE HERE TO HELP ALL THE HEDGEHOGS.**

**WISHING EVERYONE A VERY HAPPY, HEALTHY AND SAFE 2021.**

**IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THESE NEWSLETTERS, PLEASE EMAIL BACK AND WE WILL REMOVE YOU FROM OUR DATABASE.**